

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1           1.     An image forming device comprising:  
2           an image engine configured to form hard images;  
3           an environmental sensor configured to monitor at least one environmental  
4 condition proximate to the image forming device and to provide data indicative of  
5 the at least one environmental condition; and  
6           an interface configured to communicate the data indicative of the at least  
7 one environmental condition externally of the image forming device.
  
- 1           2.     The device of claim 1 wherein the image engine is configured to  
2 use a consumable to form the hard images, and the interface comprises a memory  
3 of the consumable.
  
- 1           3.     The device of claim 1 wherein the interface comprises a  
2 communications interface adapted to communicate with devices external of the  
3 image forming device.
  
- 1           4.     The device of claim 1 further comprising processing circuitry  
2 configured as an embedded web server and configured to communicate the data  
3 with respect to a client device external of the image forming device.
  
- 1           5.     The device of claim 1 further comprising:  
2 a memory; and  
3 processing circuitry configured to control storage of the data using the  
4 memory to provide a history of the environmental conditions to which the image  
forming device has been exposed.
  
- 1           6.     The device of claim 5 wherein the processing circuitry is  
2 configured to control the storage of the data at a predetermined moment in time.

1           7.     The device of claim 5 wherein the processing circuitry is  
2 configured to monitor the data and to control the storage of the data responsive  
3 to the monitoring.

1           8.     The device of claim 1 further comprising an internal power source  
2 configured to provide power to the sensor in an absence of power from a source  
3 external of the image forming device.

1           9.     The device of claim 1 wherein the environmental sensor is  
2 configured to monitor the at least one environmental condition comprising a  
3 plurality of environmental conditions proximate to the image forming device and  
4 comprising humidity and temperature.

1           10.    The device of claim 1 wherein the image engine comprises a print  
2 engine of the image forming device embodied as a printer.

1           11.    A method of operating an image forming device, the method  
2 comprising:  
3       providing an image forming device configured to form hard images;  
4       sensing at least one environmental condition of an environment proximate to  
5 the image forming device; and  
6       communicating data regarding the at least one environmental condition  
7 externally of the image forming device.

1           12.    The method of claim 11 wherein the providing comprises providing  
2 the image forming device configured to use a consumable to form hard images, and  
3 the communicating comprises storing the data regarding the at least one  
4 environmental condition using the consumable.

1           13. The method of claim 11 further comprising receiving a request  
2 within the image forming device from a source external of the image forming  
3 device, and the communicating comprises communicating responsive to the  
4 receiving.

1           14. The method of claim 11 wherein the sensing comprises sensing  
2 a plurality of environmental conditions comprising temperature and humidity.

1           15. The method of claim 11 wherein the providing comprises providing  
2 the image forming device embodied as a printer.

1           16. A method of monitoring an environment proximate to an image  
2 forming device configured to form hard images, the method comprising:  
3           providing an image forming device configured to form hard images and  
4 to monitor at least one environmental condition proximate to the image forming  
5 device and to communicate data regarding the at least one environmental condition  
6 externally of the image forming device; and  
7           receiving the data regarding the at least one environmental condition  
8 from the image forming device.

1           17. The method of claim 16 further comprising analyzing the data  
2 regarding the at least one environmental condition after the receiving to determine  
3 a quantitative parameter for the at least one environmental condition for testing  
4 other image forming devices.

1           18. The method of claim 16 further comprising communicating a  
2 request to the image forming device, and wherein the communicating the data is  
3 responsive to the communicating the request.

1           19. The method of claim 16 wherein the providing comprises providing  
2 the image forming device configured to use a consumable, and wherein the  
3 receiving the data comprises extracting the data from the consumable.

1           20. The method of claim 16 wherein the providing comprises providing  
2 the image forming device configured to monitor the at least one environmental  
3 condition comprising a plurality of environmental conditions comprising temperature  
4 and humidity.

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